

3 1761 06732243 8

*The Porch
of
Paradise*

THE
PORCH OF PARADISE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

MINGLED WINE

“Full of technically perfect poems, also full of that vastly more admirable thing—real personal feeling.”—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

“A poet with an original talent.”—*Spectator*.

“A goodly collection—all showing taste and brainwork.”—*Times*.

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.

3/6 nett.

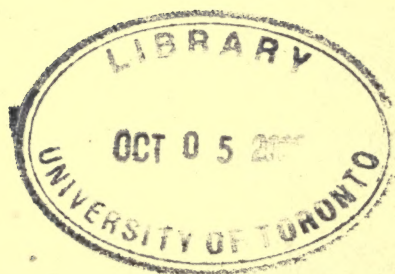
THE PORCH OF PARADISE

BY
ANNA BUNSTON

LONDON
HERBERT AND DANIEL

21, MADDOX STREET, W.

1911



“ ‘**E**VERY animal loveth his like,’ ” says the Son of Sirach, “for likeness is included in the idea of love. Man has a certain likeness to the universe, and hence he is called a little world. Man therefore naturally loves the universe ; and so desires its good. To satisfy this desire of man the universe will be improved.”

S. Thomas Aquinas.

To R.

Table of Contents

	PAGE
ALL SOULS' EVE 	3
DAWN IN THE PORCH OF PARADISE ...	11
WORK AND REST IN THE FIELDS ...	23
THE SEER OF JUDGMENT 	31
NOON 	41
THE RIVER 	49
THE SEA... 	55
THE CITY 	61
WORK AND REST IN THE CITY ...	69
THE CHILDREN	73
THE SUPPER 	79

The Scheme of the Book.

SUFFERING has been long acknowledged as an indispensable factor in the building up of souls ; the place of love and happiness is less secure. It is at least possible that there are stunted souls who cannot converse fully with the Divine Father till they have had ampler draughts from the breasts of natural joy. Aquinas speaks of two kinds of joy : joy in God and joy in His works. The writer has not ventured to do more than trouble the curtain that hides the former, and the joys of the Porch of Paradise are chiefly of the latter, or joys such as we haltingly pursue upon this present earth.

It only remains to say that the Sun, being the symbol of Christ, the great moments of worship are necessarily dawn, and noon, and evening. Water and wind being symbols of the Holy Ghost, the greatest intimacy with man and

with nature is grouped about the river, and it is by water that man progresses from the garden to the city. The wind is also the interpreter upon the sea of history, otherwise whatever of un-earthliness there is, is not due to difference in external things but in man's attitude towards them, and thus the present earth seems no mere path in the desert, but a garden approach to the celestial palaces.

ALL SOULS' EVE

I.—*All Souls' Eye.*

Introductory.

Leaves, leaves, dead leaves of autumn everywhere !

They reddened all the floor of Fontainebleau
And rustled under every heedless foot.

They choked the gutters of the streets and filled
The carts of scavengers. They danced before
My steps, an eerie ghostly dance, and touched
My cheek and wailed about my ears. " Brief life
Is theirs," said one who, passing, deemed he knew
My thought. " Brief life ? " I captured one
and read

A long, long story on its rusty face,
An age-long tale of life upon the tree
Alternating with death upon the ground.
I saw the forest dropping wintry tears
On leaves slow lapsing back to formlessness.
I saw the little sun, the little frost
Of verdant life, the fall, the death again.

The myriads and myriads of leaves
That make the forest mould cried out to me :
" Infinity, eternity we taste
Who have not breath enough to die, but what
Of man ? " The roadway echoed to my steps :
" Infinity, eternity, but what
Of man ? " And when I had attained the town
Each foot that hurried through the falling night
Beat out the words : " To-day the little sun

ALL SOULS' EVE

The little frost of life, but yesterday
We were not, and to-morrow shall not be—
Infinity, eternity, but what
Of man ? ”

It was the eve of All Souls' Day.
The early dark was vexed with chilly rain,
Tormented by the fitful gusts, and through
Uneasy doors I caught a glimpse of men
Upon their knees and heard the chant of those
Who sang the solemn dirge.

The cold increased,
And lo ! the dormitories of the dead
Began to heave, the heavy sleepers rose
And poured into the streets. I watched until
My eyes were aching with the sight. To them
Were added countless phantom souls who in
Some future day shall sun themselves between
The lonely womb and lonelier tomb. They flowed
In one continuous stream as flows the Seine
By Solferino's bridge ; the air itself
Grew populous ; the very silence swarmed.

Light played about each spirit—garrulous,
Prismatic light, that blabbed of all it found
And fed on in the soul, and published each
One's kin and pedigree of influence.
No life was so obscure but that its faith
Or unfaith, breeding still, might graft itself
On cardinals, philosophers, and kings ;

ALL SOULS' EVE

For so the proudest wind that bows the pines
And poplar trees, is charged, unask'd, with breath
Of garlic or of mignonette. I knew
That my soul, too, was linked with souls before,
And could not pass unchilded from the earth
Nor 'scape engendering futurity.

I saw that virtue, manly bravery,
Burned with a brighter flame than innocence ;
For life resembled an estate entailed
Of which no heir can boast : " This have I
bought
Or won ;" but whether it be great or small
The owner's honour lies in leaving it
Uncumbered and enriched.

The dust of long
Forgotten tombs reached out faint hands and
cried :
" How long ere thou go forward fearlessly ?
We are thy van, and souls unborn shall be
Thy rearguard." From the future muffled
tongues
Cried out : " Leave us a goodly heritage !
Sow thou and we will water and rejoice
Together when the increase comes from God."

Appalled by such a cloud of witnesses
And trembling lest I should be execrate,
Betraying these with my own soul, I turned

ALL SOULS' EVE

And stumbling, groping, sought for rest within
The dim cathedral of Notre Dame. I sank
Upon the floor, but also here were souls
Dissimilar, and yet suffused each
With crimson light and seeming fluid—such
The closeness of their unity. My brain
Was reeling. Now I thought I heard the dead
About the altars praying for the quick,
And now I saw the woods of Fontainebleau
And all the lofty trees whose heads communed
With heaven while their sunken roots drew life
From leaves of other days.

The peace of woods,

The slow and certain growth of forest trees,
Through changing seasons and the cyclic rise
And fall of lesser life, enfolded me.
God seemed a spiritual earth to whom,
At last, by howsoe'er bewild'ring ways
All life that is, comes home. The church became
A quiet wood, a sweet society
Of noble growth fed with the bread of earth
The wine of rain, and lovely with the dew
Of friendship—precious oil which overflows
Upon true men and makes them priests indeed.

And as there is an effluence of woods
Unlike the effluence of a single tree,
There seemed to be a spirit in the church
Which might be modified but could not be
Destroyed while two or three should foster it—

ALL SOULS' EVE

A child too great to leave unpaid the life
It took ; and thus there was reciprocal
And certain immortality.

Again

I trod the forest road while withered leaves,
Like dancing, russet elves, came round my ears
With dainty buffetings and playful thrusts :
“ Did ever any fall away from earth,”
They cried, “ since life began ? We therefore
dance

In autumn sereness as we danced in spring.
The dropping tears of winter penitence,
The frosts of tribulation, speed us home,
And mossy beds await us when we fall ;
Then where in all our woodland world is room
For care—for wrinkled, ugly, idle care ? ”

Once more I was in church and some one sang :
“ Although I climb up into Heav'n or make
My bed in hell, I am with Thee ; and though
I take the morning's wings and seek the seas
Of sunrise or the farthest dark, I still
Am in Thy hand —— ”

Again the scene was changed.

I stood beside the seas that break upon
The shores of Paradise, and shining ones
Who kept the harbour gate were searching souls,
Not judging, but protecting them, as does
The instinct that decides which buds are ripe,
Prepared to slip their scaly sheath and spread

ALL SOULS' EVE

Their green sails to the April wind. Most souls
Were pallid, etiolate, for lack of love's
Illuminating rays; unripe for lack
Of happiness. For such there was prepared
An earth redeemed and perfected; that they,
Who knew the bitter wintry discipline
Of suffering and shame and loneliness,
Might also know the summer of delight,
The skies of love unshadowed by a doubt,
The fields of joy untenanted of fear.

For though "The love of God is broader than
The measure of man's mind," yet all in vain
The broad sun shines apace for him who hath
No window to his house; and human love
Must make an eastern outlook for the soul
Ere it can see the dawn. He cannot dream
Of oceans who hath never seen a pool,
And therefore is there set a porch before
The doors of Paradise, in which man may
Regain the powers atrophied through long
Disuse—acquire uncared-for gladness as
Of birds at dawn, or babes that lie upon
A mother's breast and laugh into her face.

DAWN IN THE PORCH OF
PARADISE

II.—*Dawn in the Porch of Paradise*

Upon that star, which like a porch is set
Before the Paradise of God, I woke
And it was dark. All round about me lay
The ebon blanket like a soft caress,
A living armour of security,
A mantle woven of potential bliss
And present ease—more full of tenderness
Than down of brooding birds, defence more sure
Than hovering eagle's wings.

Its fragrant warmth
Was eloquent of hidden light, as when
The bridegroom's overshadowing breast builds up
His lady's cell and paradise, though all
The liliated glories of the walls are lost
To sight through very nearness to her lips—
So close, so sacred was the dark, so stored
With prophecies of life. I had no haste
To see, assured that beauty would be born
With light; that long-limbed beeches would
 respond
With sweeping curtsies to the morning breeze;
That fragrant buds would soon be fair; that
 birds—
Those free-born denizens of every heart—
Though now but winsome balls of fluff, would
 soon
Awake to pertness and to song; and thus
The vigil had the fulness of a feast.

DAWN IN THE PORCH

In happy ease I cried : " O sweetest Dusk
That ever pressed a kiss on weary eyes !
Bless now mine ears with murmur of thy name
And noble origin." Then answered he :
" My father's name was Night ; from the
embrace
Of Life and Death he sprang, and wed with Rest ;
I am their offspring Promise, and whene'er
I meet with Faith, then is Fulfilment born."

Upon the wings of shadow he withdrew,
For lo ! crowned with unutterable calm
And robed in light, came up the day-star Hope,
The virgin mother of the Christ of Joy.
Clear were her eyes with innocence, and deep
With dreams. Her lips were full with mysteries.
A crystal globe she held, wherein were seen
New vistas unimaginably fair.
Her presence seemed a kiss of God, which all
Ran up to take. In the diffused light
Of her adorable simplicity
Each man threw down his habit of disguise
And stood before his fellows, candid, brave,
Yet wearing weakness meekly, as a babe
Will wear it.

Such confession made, there came
A train of matron mists and maiden dews.
Veiled in web of silver gossamer
The elder were, the younger garmented
In nothing meaner than their shining hair.

DAWN IN THE PORCH

The mists were reverend with age as those
Must be who watched beside the new born earth
When first God laid her in her cradle, rocked
Between the moonbeams and the sun. And yet
Alert and lovely were they, all their years
Becoming them as pearls become a bride.

Upon their mother-knees they gently laid
All living things, and with consummate skill,
Begotten of long use and sympathy,
They laved and tended them, and me among
The rest. From every stain of prejudice,
From all defilements of the womb of Death
They cleansed us, till our way-worn spirits felt
An exquisite relief, as though a lark,
Long shut in a sepulchral trap, should find
The skies again. Behind the matron mists
Came maiden dews and nurtured us with draughts
Of lucid wine. And every breathing thing
And every leaf and blade was thus prepared
To be participant in coming Dawn.

Now Nature scarce could hold her secret twixt
Her trembling lips. With bated breath we heard
The skirts of silence on the hills, and then
The purple clouds that knelt along the aisles
Of Day, in soundless order, one by one,
Removed their penitential robes and stood
In chasubles of crimson barred with gold.
The stooping mountains' sombre cowls fell down

DAWN IN THE PORCH

About their knees, and showed dalmaticas
And albs of snow.

Yet not th' appalled clouds
Nor vested hills were celebrants in this
Great Eucharist of Dawn save only as
All Paradise was Host and Celebrant
And every heart a Canon of the Mass.
They need no priest where nothing is profane,
And God directly lightens every man,
But as high gates the hills lift up their heads
And let the King of Glory in.

For this,
The Porch of Heav'n lies in the lap of God,
But hath not yet the vision of His face
Save through a veil of sacramental Sun.
This Sun, this Love and Life and Light, this Christ
Took substance from the brightness of the Saints
And from the springs of that sweet day-star Hope ;
And all the dews of His eternal youth
Are beauties of men's holiness. The blood
He poured for Zion, Zion's daughter now
As pure oblation offered up to Him
Safe chalice'd in her heart.

Now floated out
A banner of expectancy—a sound
Sweet as the falling of long wished for rain,
Or song of nightingales to those that watch
In June—a voice like dropping pearls that sang ;
“ Rejoice, O Zion, for thy King is near,”

DAWN IN THE PORCH

And then as thunder after lightning came
The answering shout—"Blessed be He that
comes,"

And quiet as the birth at Bethlehem,
And as at Sinai bright, came up our Sun,
From opening clouds our Saviour budded forth
And shone out unto us. He sought His own
And in His own He found Himself. His own
Received with Him the life that once they gave,
But quickened, multiplied a thousand fold.
The scattered grain, the seed of saints thrown out
Upon the hills, was harvested and made
One bread—the Christ; and Zion's daughter
knew

A Mary's joy, and cradled on her knees
A Son, a child of her own travail born,
A life that she had given which yet was His
Or ever it was hers.

Ah! then was heard
The birthcry of the souls new born to Heav'n,
As those whose treadings oft had well-nigh slipt,
Whose hope was tremulous, whose faith was faint,
Now saw the goal, now felt the sure embrace
Of love in those warm rays that wrapt them round.
Forward they leaned, with arms outspread,
wrung lips,
And cheeks earth-pale where flowed the last of
tears
That they would ever shed. They knew God's
hand

DAWN IN THE PORCH

That wiped away those tears and knew His
friends

That gathered round, and in their loving arms
Were steadied into peace.

With clasping hands
And happy eyes of mutual amity
The blest inhabitants of Paradise
On wings of worship lifted up their hearts
And sang aloud. My memory retains
A halting outline of that anthem still :

THE HYMN.

O Husbandman Divine! O Holy Ghost!
See on the hills of Past and Present spread
The waving harvest of the wheat of faith,
O reap and bind and make us all one bread.

O Holy Vintner! look upon the grapes
The varied fruit of one far-spreading vine,
Of every soul express the separate sweet
And in Thy winepress make us all one wine.

O blessed Christ! this bread of blended faith
We offer Thee for resurrection meat
And for Thy thirst th' oblation of ourselves,
The wine that flowed about Thy pierced feet.

DAWN IN THE PORCH

O Father! grant us sanctuary with Thee
Since we with Christ are interfused and bound
And in His virgin, His redeemed mankind,
As once in Mary's womb, Thy Son is found.

Blessed be God, in Whom all things abide,
Blessed be Christ, of God and Man the Son,
And blest th' eternal Bond, the Holy Ghost
For ever blessed be the Three in One!

Their song was lost in praise that may not be
Reported earthly wise. And all the while
Came welling up between the cadences
Delicious rippings as of summer rain,
Or murmurous secrets of long silent seas
Divulged by whispering shells, as angel choirs
Fulfilled our meagre aria of praise
With noble symphony.

The Amen sung,
Those heavenly weavers of the web of praise
Stoop'd down and caught our Alleluias up
And wove them in their cloth of melody—
For every heav'nly banner hath for warp
The angels, but for woof our human praise—
Which they strewed out upon the floor of Heav'n
Until our canopy of song became
The footstool of the Lord.

Now, girt with strength,
Our living Sun redeemed all things that are :

DAWN IN THE PORCH

The green of trees, the crimson of the rose,
The stream's transparency, the countenance
And comeliness of men. And each one knelt
And cried: "Behold Thy Lamb, O Lamb of
God,"

As that incomparable light suffused
His face, and lit the lamp of each man's heart
And stirred his soul to ecstasy.

Each blade
And bloom stretched sunward and the small
birds sang

As though they had no being but a song.
Trees clapped their leafy hands, the waters poured
The music learned of morning stars; no part
Of Paradise but felt the pulse of joy,
The fulness of the glory of the Lord.

Oh deep, deep, deep was their rejoicing, not
Like joy of those who hardly have, and fear
To lose; exceeding great, yet tranquil as
The joy of him who hears declared the love
Long indirectly manifest; or joy
Of little children whose unconscious faith
Annulling time, redeems the summer day
And makes it infinite.

The flocks of God
Not only nothing lacked but knew that now
They nevermore could lack. The wolves of want
And Fear-to-Want might never leap the fence
Of those Elysian folds. No sheep need check
His venturous feet on whatsoever path

DAWN IN THE PORCH

Invited him, for now no hireling, but
Their very David, shepherd, priest, and king
Protected them. Against their foes his rod
Of power might not fail, nor for themselves
His mercy's crook. Therefore abiding joy
Was theirs, inherent as the noble calm
Of forest depths, of mountain-girded lakes
Or plains that have no fencing save the sky—
Joy like the barley loaves of Galilee
Most bless'd in being shared, increased by each
Participant until one separate heart
Might out-rejoice the throbbing universe.

**WORK AND REST IN THE
FIELDS**

III.—*Work and Rest in the Fields*

O happy plains of Paradise
Where flowing waters be
All sadness flies Thy singing skies
God set my feet on thee.

Transfused by sunlight,—sacrament of love,
Refreshed with water of the Holy Ghost,
Man gladly went to labour which was rest,
His spirit flowing through his blessing hands
Upon material whose proper worth
He only could elucidate. And thus
The sculptor, giving substance to his dreams;
Took courteous care to manifest the grace
Of every quarried handmaid to his will,
Redeeming such together with his thought.
And this begetting of ideals upon
The patient body of the earth, was source
Of strenuous delight, while growing skill
Made each day's work a step upon the stairs
Of joy.

I stood by fields and farms where men
Were working with a glad intensity
As works the swallow bent to feed her young.
All knew they did not spend their strength for
naught,
That every action was a seed whose plant
Should bloom in Heav'n and therefore used the
spade,

WORK AND REST IN THE FIELDS

The axe, the saw as tools wherewith to shape
Their individual hope. Although no minds
Were like, yet all were tempered to the whole
Intent of God—the many wires of one
Well tuned dulcimer. Thus all who shaped
Their proper Paradise laid stones upon
The walls of new Jerusalem. The Sun
Diffused a sacrificial will among
The very birds and beasts, who lent themselves
With conscious pleasure to the ends of man.
The tiller of the soil was gladdened by
The brown earth's charity, and he that hewed
The rock rejoiced together with the cliff
Whence it was hewn. The angels, lily fair
And swallow fleet, passed everywhere to help
Or guide at need.

Nor lingered numb fatigue
In that fair porch of Paradise, but passed
As rippling shadows over river reeds
To make the sunlight dearer, and declare
That this was not the summer solstice, not
The final consummation, but the spring,
The April day of Joy. Not yet the fruit
Was set upon the blossom of our bliss
But all the branch was sound. No taint remained,
No sad infection. Duty was renamed
Delight, and love was ready for the winds
Of Liberty that shake the trees upon
The uplands of God's will.

Now men were wise
To trust the seasons of God's mysteries

WORK AND REST IN THE FIELDS

And hail the naked bough, the bud, the fruit,
And lose no quality of one through haste
To reach the next so certainly in store.

Not yet were summer heat and winter cold
Exchanged for one Elysian temperature
(Save that the summer gladness never left
The hearts of men),—there was necessity
For raiment still. Dress was a sacrament,
The sign of that fair grace wherewith each one
Would clothe his soul. The azure flax had
strewed

The fields with fragments of the sky, and like
A dedicated virgin gave itself
To purifying waters—to the rods
And painful combs ; while maidens in whose eyes
The flax for ever bloomed bent over it
And spun and carded it with careful hands,
Redeeming flax as Christ redeeméd them.
As Christ, the reapers bent across the corn,
As Christ, the women, cleansing, calming, passed
About their shining homes. And everywhere
Hills clapped their hands, the valleys laughed and
sang,

And men rejoiced beneath the climbing sun
With joy unsearchable.

In every pause
Of labour, when the labourer looked upon
His fellow, such endearing sympathy,
Such union in discipleship shone through

WORK AND REST IN THE FIELDS

The lovely lattice of his loving soul.
That each exchange of glances seemed a swift
And mutual sacrament.

And every form

Had more than mortal comeliness, and on
Each countenance a sweet amazed delight
Would sail across the deep serenity
Like thin white clouds across September's blue.
In fitness exquisite their raiment lay
About their limbs, as lie the leaves around
The yet unbloomed fritillary, and some
Were fair with broideries as lilies culled
In France. For many a summer afternoon
Beneath the junipers the shepherds lay
And plucked the gentian's little sky-filled cups,
The sun-kissed marigolds, the violet,
The daisy's babyhood, the harebell's truth,
The mystic herbs of trefoil, colchicum
And asphodel, with all the fairy blooms
That grow where shepherd's tread, and make the
floor

Of Earth more lovely to the hosts of Heav'n
Than are the starry skies to us who pray.
All these they culled, and pictured them upon
Their garments' hems, embroidering with long
And loose-spun threads of silky flax.

But first

They visited the henna bush and spared
Its fragrant pannicles, but tithed the leaves
Obtaining from their sap an amber dye ;
Tinctures they made from stalks of indigo,

WORK AND REST IN THE FIELDS

From saffron and the fragrant sandalwood,
From safflower and sappanwood, from woad
Well bruis'd, reseda, madder and munjeet,
And in these stolen tints they steeped their
 threads
And fed their needles with the counterpart
Of every petal's shade.

 Nor blooms, alone,
But all they saw from dawn to dewy dusk
They blazoned on their blankets or their tents :
Themselves, their sheep and goats, the buffalo,
Mud-coated, crescent horned, the broad winged
 birds
That flying swept their shadows o'er the grass,
The quaint inhabitants of ponds and pools
The ambling camel and the elephant,
The wooden wagons from the little farms
And all the daylong pageantry ; these things
They broidered, sitting by the junipers
Among their browsing flocks.

 And flutes they had
From out whose wooden throats they drew such
 sweet
Wild sounds as conjured up the very breath
Of sloping grassy hills that lie and bask
Like great green lizards in the sun ; of far,
Immaculate and footless fields of snow
Where nothing moves but shadows of the clouds ;
Of wide unfenced plains with here and there
A lonely well ; Of forests, dark with firs,

WORK AND REST IN THE FIELDS

Whose fragrant cloisters Twilight never leaves
Save at the bidding of her mother, Night.
The freshness of the waterfalls, the light
And frolic laughter of the rivulets,
The crystal tones of raindrops whispering
To earth the secrets of the sky—all these
Were in the melody they drew from reeds
Of ebony and honey-coloured box
Whose breath of life lay in the shepherd's lips.

I saw that all their flutings and their songs
Filled angel bosoms and were harvested
In the aërial granaries of Heav'n.
For as the shepherds of our southern downs
May hear the showered carols of the lark,
The peewit's plaint, the sheepbell's scattered
chime,
Yet never lose the voice of winds that love
The beeches on the knoll, nor yet the slow
Pulsation of the sea below the cliff,
So through their music rang the golden tones
Of worship and the silver clang of praise.

O happy plains of Paradise
Where flowing waters be
And sadness flies thy singing skies.
God set my feet on thee !

THE SEER OF JUDGMENT

IV.—*The Seer of Judgment.*

I saw the shepherds in the summer night
Lie prone upon the grass with faces turned
Towards the complex skies, and minds that
searched

God's footsteps in His pathless space, I felt
The cool, dark air, the pure solemnity,
The presence of the angels communing
With them, and drew anigh to hear,—but all
The scene grew dim and passed.

I talked with one
Upon whose soul the ploughshare pain had made
Deep furrows for the tender green of joy.

"Thou art of those," he said, "to whom God
gives

A glimpse of things to come; and yet because
The eye unmedicined from the phials of death
Can never bear the eagle-dazzling light
Of utter truth, He can but show thee through
A darkened glass so much as thou thyself
Canst apprehend and afterwards declare
In terms of earthly life. Thou seest then
But such a day as might be seen on earth
If man's perspective changed, and if his faith
And hope and love were raised to the degree
Of ecstasy; for one who was allowed
To visit Hell declared it such as Earth
Might be if courage and affection failed,

THE SEER OF JUDGMENT

If beauty were esteemed a trick, and truth
A legendary quest, if flowers were
Considered but secretions of the ground,
And birds but feeding, flying things, and man
An active sin."

In fear I answered: "Why
Am I, dim-sighted and of stammering tongue,
Entrusted with a vision which would task
A prophet's eyes, a poet's lips?" He smiled;
"Ask God who sends a small grey worm to clothe
An emperor."

He showed me one with hair
Like polished silver and with eyes that held
The gathered light of many a summer noon,
And said: "That radiant seer obtained a glimpse
Of Heav'n itself, but when he fain would speak
Of it on earth, all men esteemed him mad.
His laughter was as fresh and sweet as song
Of birds in May, and anxious men, who deem
That God's great masterpieces hang upon
Our prentice hands, were almost healed, so great
The spell of it,—ere they could silence him.
He dwells among us here to stimulate
Desire which else might flag for present bliss.
His presence is a gospel which no words
Could have declared, and, seeing him, we bring
Fresh offerings to help the Church on earth—
That weary limb for which the body waits
Ere it be consummate in bliss."

"Are saints
Enskied," I asked, "so linked with living men?"

THE SEER OF JUDGMENT

" The brightest lily of the Lenten woods,"
He said, " arrayed in livery of the sun,
Depends upon a buried bulb ; the bulb
Depends on mediating leaves that bring
The breath of Heaven to the dust of earth ;
And so the Church in glory, rest and war
Has triune life or none. Can clouds exist
Without the sun or sea ? Would light and sound
Survive if air were dead ? All things that are
Interdepend eternally. Herein
Consists the awfulness of human life,
That no man knows the confines of a sin,
The generations of a virtuous deed ;
And hence the obligation to entreat
All men with tender charity, since all
Are victims if offenders too ; and oft
The fractures of the wicked are derived
From flaws of saints. And since one perfect Life
Can leaven all, perhaps one sinning soul
Can stay the bliss of all the Church of God—
But such apocalyptic things are hid
From me who saw, by privilege of God,
One little court of judgment and no more."

" And were the spirits there adjudged to this
Fair ante-room of Paradise ? " I asked.

" Some were detained in bonds," he answered me,
" For there were stunted souls who might not
wear

THE SEER OF JUDGMENT

The manly toga of full liberty,
Irreverent towards the beasts and plants
Of God, irreverent to men, and where
They were it never could be Paradise.

“ And some were ignorant, and thought it not
An all-obliterating dignity
To be the sons of God, but pleaded some
Peculiar claim to His approval or
His care. To such the angel gravely said :
‘ The new Jerusalem has gateways twelve
And each a pearl. For God is holier
Than Jacob was, and gives no coloured coat
Of privilege, but loveth all His sons
With perfect love, which not admits degrees ;
And when ye love your brethren perfectly
Ye will rejoice that this is so.’

To one
Who had not dared approach he cried : ‘ Come
in,
Thou blessed of my God ! Here shalt thou meet
With Him whose unsigned orders thou didst well
Obey ; here find that family whose traits
Thou hast not lost in thine obscurity.’

“ A poet came to whom the angel said :
‘ This blissful island porch is not for thee
Who hast already tasted Paradise
And Hell, but missed the deep philosophy,
The tree-like strength and calm that come from
slow,

THE SEER OF JUDGMENT

Long, vegetative hours of manual toil ;
And therefore shalt thou help to sail the boats
That bear the blest to that Elysian isle
Whose anchorage thou knowest. When thy
work—

Thy holy work—and sleep have healed thee,
Then shalt thou sing, not feverishly like
A death-doomed swan, but with a blackbird's
rich,

Unhurrying note of uttermost content,
Nor be perturbed to know that Paradise
Is hanging on thy lips ; for everywhere,
Before the altar and behind the plough
Work flags,' he said, ' for lack of song. Great
loves,

Great victories and noble worship hide
And hibernate within the souls of men
Until some poet, proper to his age,
As cuckoo to the spring, shall call them forth.'

" Behind him waited one who trembling said :
' It profits not that ye should weigh my case,
For reared upon a cold and narrow creed,
I little heard of truth till now.' To whom
'Twas answered : ' If the lamb hath eaten herbs
Of bitterness or drunk of stagnant pools,
Shall he or shall the shepherd bear the stripes ? '
' Ah ! not the shepherd ! ' cried the waiting soul.
' I think he was distrustful of the stream
And long, lush meadow grass. Perhaps upon

THE SEER OF JUDGMENT

God's great manorial lands some shepherds'
flocks

Must crop a scantier herbage than the rest.'

He paused, confused at having bared his thought

In such high company. The angel stooped,

And taking both his hands replied : ' Sweet soul,

Come in, come in, and all thou here shalt find

Shall be the dearer for thy hardships done.'

" And then an angel took my hand and led
Me through the labyrinth of my own life.

From earliest consciousness to final death

We passed, and all the time I sought for some

Escape to Hell. Beneath my feet there lay

The stones, the thistles and the thorns ; before

My eyes there danced the flowery orchard ways

That would have been, had I but lived in faith.

Each loveless deed had bred a fungus growth,

A pestilence, with whose most horrid spores

The wind infected half my neighbour's fields.

The untilled ground, which represented all

Those days for which my plea was, that I did

No harm, was utterly destroyed—become

A wretched mat of nettle roots ; but where

I had essayed to cultivate a crop

Unsuited to the soil, a wiser hand

Had scattered clover seed, whose purple crowns

Be-gemmed with bees, were now my only wealth.

THE SEER OF JUDGMENT

“ But here and there heartsease or primrose
pushed

As when, at First Communion, I had prayed
That God would come, if not to me, at least
To all beside ; or later, when the love
I bore my wife expelled the love of self.
Elsewhere the hideousness of all was more
Than I can tell of here ; the stupid sin,
The barren negatives ; the wilfulness
That shut the sunlight out and then blasphemed
Because the place was dark. I longed to be
Consumed in flame if first I might undo
The evil done. And then my swooning eyes
Beheld a blood-red hand that moved above
The desolation of my life, and made
It blossom as a rose. I knew no more
Until I stood upon this island porch
Before the dawn. I am absolved, and yet
I bear the marks of pain, the brand of Earth,
Contrasting with the halo of this isle,
And emphasizing our deliverance,
Since on the limbs which once the fetter galled
The spoil of Egypt sparkling hangs.

“ How long shall Christ’s adoréd feet prefer
Their cloudy floor to our fair hills of earth ? ”
I rashly asked. To which the seer replied :
“ Faith is the womb in which alone the thoughts
Of God take substance ; therefore when the
Church

THE SEER OF JUDGMENT

Shall be mature, prepared to meet her Spouse,
Her 'Ave! gratia plena' shall be heard,
Her Expectation be conceived and born,
And all the barren World behold amazed
The once despised rival's motherhood."

NOON

V.—*Noon.*

As noon drew near, buds opened out, like lips
Of cherubs that begin to laugh ; the fruit
Blushed red, and shy success began to crown
Each work according to its kind ; for this
Had Love obtained when crowned upon the cross.
The brilliant light brought Judgment in its train,
And Judgment was espous'd with Praise, for all
Beheld their labour—though in infancy—
Yet full of certain promise ; and they knew
The craftsman's gladness in controlléd hands,
The artist's joy, yea, joy of God who sees
His thought born into corporeity.
Twofold their labour was, for when the hand
Had fashioned out a body for the thought,
That birth, in turn, wrought finely on the soul,
Both building, so, the household of the Lord.

Now while I thought on these things, suddenly
Like cloudlets that, appearing from the West,
Spread fanwise over all the blue and rule
With ashen sway ; or as the way of sleep
Is with a child, when first the dancing lights
In his bright eyes go heavy shod, and then
His limbs obey the dragging music one
By one, till statue-still he lies ; so crept
A little air of quietness about
The circles of the sun and, waxing, grew
To universal silence. Nature's self,

NOON

Our chatelaine, laid finger on her lips,
Her guests and all her house, expectant, not
Constrained, fell silent too. The little leaves
Forbore their frolic dance, the elvish streams
Forgot to laugh, the sparrows—though full
primed

With lively gossip of the feathered world—
Withheld their careless comments for a time.
The starling checked alike his rhetoric
And notes of love ; the squirrel left his nut
Untried ; the dove preened not her wing.

Then like

A single sail upon a lonely sea
A voice sang out, parting the soundless air :

“ Behold, the tabernacle of our God
Is builded among men : O living tent,
O fabric woven of the Holy Ghost,
Arise and sing ! ”

And we arose and sang :

THE NOONTIDE HYMN.

O Lamb of God ! and Shepherd of the flock,
For whose sake noons are sanctified and sweet,
Come to the pastures which Thy life-blood bought
And stay within our hearts Thy pierced feet.

NOON

O bright primeval Wisdom ! God with us
In human letters spelling truth divine,
Thou Word made flesh assume us to Thyself
And make each one of us a word of Thine.

O burning Love ! God's face made visible,
Illumine us, enkindle and inspire
Till we from glory unto glory changed
Flame up at last into an ans'ring fire.

Glory to God, the Source of all that is,
And glory to His Son, th' incarnate Word,
And to the Holy Ghost, the mighty Wind,
The Tongue of fire, the Heav'n descending Bird.

Then on our eager, straining ear there broke
A faint, far off, and dreamlike harmony,
An angel antiphon. Though exquisite,
Unearthly, yet it seemed not wholly strange
But moved us as the sons of exiles might
Be moved by music of the father-land
First heard upon the ship that brings them home.
We knew it was an utterance of praise
And promise of increasing cause for praise
Expressed in words of more mellifluous sound
And deeper import than the words we use,
And sung to strings of sweetness never swept
On Earth.

NOON

Now in the steady light our Christ
The Light of lights that lighteth every man,
Through Whom the fire of God illumines, not
Consumes,—who being brighter than the sun
Ashining in his strength, yet deigns to heed
The seven candlesticks, the little flames
That feed upon the wax of human faith—
He flashing eyed, and girt with blazing gold
Who bears the seven stars, the two-edged sword,
Whose hair is as the snows of Himalay,
He, gentle as a weanling lamb, and as
A shepherd kind, refrained His glowing feet
And at the zenith of His glory paused,
Our sovereign shepherd paused to make his sheep
Lie down at noon.

His grateful sheep looked up
To bless His love and bless His holy law—
The wattled cotes that kept them from the
wolves—

And penned them in the pleasant pastures where
The fourfold waters flow. And then with hearts
At ease they bless'd each other and sat down
In families, or groups by friendship linked.
For some were set in families, that Love
Who needs a roomy nursery might find
An ample space, a genial fostering.
And some had no more need to nest, their Love
Was fledged and found in every heart a bough
Whereon to sing.

Young maidens, blossom sweet,
Brought out the honey, milk and summer fruits,

NOON

The curdled cheeses and the wheaten cakes
Prepared with nicest skill ; while interchange
Of kindness made the meal an agapé.

The old inhabitants grown ruddy, strong,
And eagle-hearted sunned them in the full
Unmitigated light, as though they bathed
In milk ; and some like violets enjoyed
The dappled brightness of the leafy banks
And some, the tenderest, sought out the dim
And half-lit sanctuaries 'neath the roof
Of yew or cypress tree ; or rocky shrine
Of dusky, fern-embroidered pools. No night
On earth has ever known such peace as noon
Knows in the Porch of Paradise, for there
No sultry heat, no bastard relative
Of sleep, no sluggish drowsiness oppressed,
But all the air was still, and fresh, and blue
As in rare autumn days when tender South
Decoys the sun, and North can nothing do
But lay long fingers on th' elastic shades
And stretch them to herself ; when pencillings
Of rainbow light are seen above the sheep
And down the pillars of the nearer beech
And drawn as haloes round the doméd ricks
Until they seem the pearl-roofed cupolas
Of New Jerusalem ; and every hill
And distant woodland wears a veil of haze
As blue and delicate as children's eyes.
Our shepherd's glory thus was tempered, not
Obscured. Cascades and rivulets shook out

NOON

Their liquid tresses till the air was cool
And musical ; the flowers, prodigal
Of favours, left their kisses on the lips
Of every zephyr. So delectable
The pastures were, wherein we fed at noon.

THE RIVER

VI.—*The River.*

I know not how that blessed noontide sped,
But presently it came to pass I stood
With children on a knoll and looked across
To where a city's domes and minnarets
Rose up like snow-capped hills against the sky.
The parents bade me choose my route thereto,
For though the elements in ways as yet
Undreamed on earth would bow to mortal yoke
Nor time nor space were wholly subjugate.
Then I, who read the children's looks, replied :
" The river and the wind anticipate
Our will, it were but gracious to make use
Of proffered service rather than request
Some other." Laughingly the children kissed
Our hands. " The stream shall bear us on its
back,"

They cried, and ran, barefoot, to where within
A little rushy cove their boat was moored.
Soon, like a summer cloudlet floating sole
Upon the blue Pacific of a sky
New washed by rain, around the river's bend
Appeared her snowy sails. Her crew of three,
Their unbound hair like banners in the breeze,
With blythe manoeuvring and pretty pride
Of seamanship then brought her to the steps
And we embarked.

With reverent eagerness
The children waited on our ease or heard

THE RIVER

The counsel of their parents who, in turn,
Forbore all needless check or reprimand
But gave again the courtesy they claimed.
The lady's presence made our little boat
A home. I felt as if I had been bred
Beside her and had always known her love.
Sweet Holiday went with us and we threw
The alms of song to many a pilgrim scene
That glided past our prow ; to swarded banks
Well set with rows of kindly orchard trees
And diapered with lilies of the moon
And starry asphodels ; of terraces
Made glad with fruitful vines, whereof we plucked
(The custom of that land inviting us) ;
Of forest slopes with noble roots of oak
And beech that leant and lapped the stream
there, where
The antlered stags came down to drink ; of ranks
Of peaceful poplars which would pass us two
By two, succeeding rhythmically like
The panorama of a dream ; the cool
Brown aromatic cloisters of the pines ;
Low shores that blushed with willow herb as if
They had been plundering the sunset sky,
And paled with meadowsweet as if they stole
The foam ; with orchids and the heavenly-eyed
Forget-me-nots, marsh mallows red and white
And melon plants whose primrose colour'd fruit,
On broad, rough leaves, trailed out upon the
stream
As though the water brought forth moons.

THE RIVER

Amid

Their lancer pursuivants the lovely brood
Of Iris, flaunted their embroidered flags
Or furled them close ; and white and green and
gold,
Upon the stiller reaches, lilies lay
Like scattered gems upon a mirror's face.

Formed by the elbow of the stream we found
A sheltered, sunny and secluded bay
Where, hushed and slumbrous, pillowed on a
wave
That for her sake its heaving bosom stilled,
The lotus of the Ganges and the Nile
Lay dreaming of her ancient mysteries,
Nor aught relinquished of her potent spell
Of beauty absolute. We saw great fish
Like floating, quenchless flames, and creatures
strange
With sidelong glances and with gaping mouths,—
The kindly little clowns of waterdom—
And brilliant insects buzzing to and fro
With cryptic industry, or tasting life
As one long ecstasy of idleness.

Sweet was the rippling water and the stir
Of wings ; of little birds in silver grey,
Like willow fairies or like quaker thoughts,
That swung upon the waving reeds or filled
The blue-brown shadows of the bended sedge

THE RIVER

With elfin melody ; while feathered tribes,
Compact of sunlight as a rainbow's heart,
Composed their colour symphonies. Great birds
Of graver charm stood, statue-like, to watch
The waters play about their feet. None fled
At our approach. Our happy hands could feel
The bee-weight of the painted humming bird,
Could stroke the firm-pressed feathers of the
stork,

Or stir the plumage of the least of wrens
Soft as the sallows where they breed. Behind
The nearer beauty lay the distant hills
Whose insubstantial snowy peaks appeared
A spiritual outline on the sky,
Pale as the moon by day.

From time to time
The lustrous gleam of angels' wings confirmed
Our peace and happiness. All Nature wore
The robe of glamour she had worn all day
As though with us she shared some secret joy,
Ineffable, yet consciously possessed.
This sentientness of Nature, this response,
Though vague and subtle as the scent of silks
Stored in one hold with gums of Araby
Or packed in cedarn presses, yet prevailed
Upon the melancholy that on earth
Such tender charm, by its aloofness, stirs
In yearning souls still virgin of their God.

THE SEA

VII.—*The Sea.*

Above the city roofs the clouds were stretched,
Transparent pinions, tempering the heat
And light. Beyond lay gleaming, level haze
To which my host, alluding, said : " The sea,
Yet not the sea. What seemed her treacherous
heart

Is won. Her former fickleness is now
A wayward charm as man anticipates
With intimate affection all her moods
Which ignorance alone made dangerous.
For Knowledge, child of Love, brings Liberty
And man is free of wind and wave as are
The petrel and the albatross."

" And have
You then," I asked, " a scope for the romance
That clings to mast and sail and running seas,
And can you press adventurous delight
Into your brimming cup of bliss ? " " We
can,"

He said, " for none have yet attained, by air
Or water, to the farthest western coast,
The total confines of the sea that laves
Our shores, yet scorns the outrage of a chart.
But in her lonely bosom islands lie
So sentinelled by mist that scarce a bird
Discovers them, and sailors see them not
Until their keel grates on their very shore.
In these elusive dreamlands dwell those fair

THE SEA

Creations of the thought and faith of man
In which the lineage ultimate of God
Is not obscuréd quite. A noble king
Forgetteth not his foster nurse, and all
The fables by which men have lived and died
Are fibres in the fabric of the New
Jerusalem.

“ All races, therefore, have
Their Avalons, set round with watchman clouds
Or walls of rainbow-haunted spray, wherein,
As in a sea-bird's nest, their demigods
And heroes lie asleep, and serve in dreams
The tribes whose faith and worship gave them
birth,
And grow to that estate which shall be theirs
That day, when Ethiope and Saba, Rome
And Greece, Cathay and Hindostan shall know
What streets they built in the metropolis
Of God.

“ And mariners bring home strange tales,
Of Children of the Mist who still delight
To scour, with thunder-footed steeds, the plains
Of silver cloud ; of far-off waters, cleft
By carven galleys on whose turret-sterns
The bronzed and bearded Vikings stand, like oaks
Of Bashan when Kadim blows up across
The wilderness ; but whence those horses came
Or where those galleys go, they know not, save
That nothing comes and goes but by the will
Of God. And there are promontories where
Pagodas, built of burnished gold, flash like

THE SEA

The horns of day. There Kama-Lokas, Lands
Of Youth, Valhallas, Eldorados wait
Their heroes and historians. There, too,
Perchance, still grow the golden fruits of famed
Hesperides. And, scattered from the lap
Of wandering winds, such odours fall as rose
Not from the bales of spicery, and balm
And myrrh the camels of the Ishmaelites
From Gilead into Egypt bare : such scent
As blows not o'er the groves of cinnamon,
Of almonds, aloes and of calamus
That fringe the sultry plains of Havilah :
Yea, sweeter even than the fragrance shed
When Shebah's dusky slaves shook down the
 spoil
That scented all the courts of Solomon.

“ And other voyagers have heard strange sounds
Of subtle music played on strings that seemed
The stolen fibres of their very heart,
So plaintively the haunting, homeless strains
Called to the spell-bound air. No voyager
Hath found the shores that hold such harpers,
 none
Hath seen the choirs whose songs are vocal dreams
But all affirm that everywhere there blows,
Though with unequal force, the breath of God,
The Primal Wind that stirred the earliest deep ;
And waiting on that Breeze the mariner
May see a cloudy curtain raised, may catch
A glimpse of admirable things, and know

THE SEA

In what amazing multitudinous ways
The Lord brings home His own."

"And thus," he said,
"We still have our adventurers, our new
Ulysses, Columbanus, Brendan blest,
Maelduin, and all to whom the ocean salt
Is sweet as honey from the hive. Nor lack
We bold aërial Argonauts, who dare
The arctic, dark, and interstellar space,
The blazing comet and the falling star.
To count the footsteps of the wandering suns,
The planet consorts of each flaming Lord
And all their bond-maid moons."

THE CITY

VIII.—*The City.*

O gleaming port of Paradise,
Set in a secret sea,
To be the prize of all the wise
God steer me to thy quay!

We neared the city—Gates of carbuncle
Flung open flanked the river's widening banks
As if with flaming coal. The landward gates
Were near, and formed of mighty fig-trees cut
In creamy-hued chalcedony, the leaves
Of chrysoprase, the fruit of jasper red.
These gates were ever open night and day
And round their carven stems and foliage
The wild convolvulus had climbed, and lent
Her darling blushes to their waxen grace,
While like a moon that looks from fleecy clouds
The towers of the city showed above.
Beneath the linden trees that lined the wharves,
Like flocking swans the gondolas were moored,
And when we parted, where we left our boat
I know not, but I found myself alone.

The loveliness of all our way, the sweet
Refreshment and continual increase
Of life that emanated from each wave
And ripple of the stream, the sunlight's dear
Caresses like a mystical embrace,
The flawless beauty of the children, clear

THE CITY

As fountain water, vital exquisite
As though a seraph soul should permeate
A dew-washed rose—the more than charity
That blest our intercourse—all these had worked
Such utter gladness that I deemed myself
To have attained joy's topmost pinnacle.
But as the pilgrim northward from Bengal
Finds at each step a new magnificence
And deems the panorama ends with high
Sinchul, which reached, becomes the platform
whence

His mazéd eyes behold, range over range,
The Heav'n assaulting peaks of Himalay,
So my astonished soul leapt up to know
She had but trod the bases of her joy.
For in the happy throngs that came and went
About the myrtle-scented streets, I saw
New peaks, new apexes of Love divine,
For happy, holy things are multiplied
By intercourse and heavenly light hath no
Reflector like the human eye.

Here work
Was wed with melody. The people seemed
Like birds who build a nest and often pause
To ease their throats of overflowing song,
Could I have captured what they sang, and let
It loose on earth, the world were blythe indeed.

The city courts of alabaster gleamed
Like quarried moonbeams 'mid the shade

THE CITY

Of Lebanon's dark loneliness ; and domes
Of porphyry, each one a glowing rose,
And crystal roofs, like builded clouds, looked out
Above dark firs and shining box ; while roads
Of Parian marble, paths of serpentine
Between the bays and oleanders ran,
And by hibiscus flames and flowering palms,
Mimosa and the mulberry. And here
And there, upon a little eminence,
A fan-shaped ilex or an orange tree
Stood singly, every lovely outline drawn
In sole perfection clear against the sky,
Displaying its great Architect's design
In spreading base, in wreathed and pillared trunk
And all the vaulted roofing of the boughs.

Contrasting with the starry citron trees,
Pomegranates opened blood red blooms and hung
Their exquisitely moulded ruddy fruit
Between their glossy leaves.

Dark olives grew
With coral blossomed almonds interspersed
While roses laughed beside the sombre figs.

And southwards of the town were vineyards
made
And orchards with array of pleasant fruits
And free to all. And there were flooded pools
In which the conscious trees might contemplate
Their mirrored loveliness. Abundant streams
Made glad this city of our God and filled

THE CITY

The air with sound of flowing rivulets
As with the murmurous hum of summer bees ;
Yet all the dream-like beauty of the place
Seemed but a vase to hold the living blooms,
The loveliness of its inhabitants.

In all the flowery streets I saw no house
Repeat another, for the viewless hands
Of character designed each dwelling place
While yet the destined owner trod the earth.
No house was mean, none merely grand, but each
Stood individually fair, a home
To charm the heart ; for so the thistle finch
Goes glorious in rubies and in gold,
Nor envies that the hoopoo wears a crest
Of cinnamon and wings of ivory
Besprent with night. The wood anemone
Is angel-pale and spiritual as
The wind that plays with her, but none the less
Are summer poppies flamboyantly fair.

I saw no temple there. Faint wings of cloud
By day, faint wings of fire by night, declare
Th' unsleeping watchfulness of God. Men meet
In courts or gardens or upon the hills
To sing in chorus their entrancing songs,
But none saith to his brother : " Know the
Lord,"
For least and greatest know and worship Him.

No hospital they have, th' inhabitant
Saith never " I am sick," for heavenly law

THE CITY

Is prized above all costly treasure, found
More sweet than honey and the honeycomb.
Nor were there hireling comedians—
No fogs of weariness or grief or gloom
Cry out for banishment, but all disport
Themselves as happy children do, from no
Incentive but their own abounding life,
And pressure of joy's tidal overflow.

The city shimmered in a haze of bliss
And looking thereupon I cried with tears
The porch so fair, what shall the palace be?

O gleaming port of Paradise
Set in a secret sea,
To be the prize of all the wise
God steer me to thy quay!

WORK AND REST IN THE
CITY

IX.—*Work and Rest in the City.*

There passed before me scenes, of water ways,
Canals so clear they seemed to pave the street
With clouds and sky, where laden boats disturbed
The painted reflex of the trees and roofs ;
And busy market squares alive with sound
And colour like bazaars of Orient.

I saw that every work begun in Time
Is consummated in Eternity—
That man can undertake no enterprise,
Launch no least yacht against the buccaneers
And vandals of negation, but that if
He hoist the sail humility, some breath,
Some current of the Holy Ghost shall draught
Him to the heavenly havens after he
Hath won the subsidies of God. For God
Is always Yea, His name is still I AM.

On, like a scroll unfolded, passed the scenes,
Of courts with booths and coloured awnings
where
The cunning lapidaries plied their trade
While fuchsias, brighter than the gems they
ground,
Were nodding at their doors ; of giant yews
From out whose hollow darkness forges gleamed
Where gold and iron, brass and silver smiths
On merry anvils hammered out God's praise ;

WORK AND REST IN THE CITY

Of blue-frocted potters singing at their wheels
By blushing tamarisks ; of carpenters
Who sawed and planed 'neath latticed roofs made
gay

With jessamine and eglantine ; of maids
Who brought the music of the spinning wheel
To mossy banks, and carolled while they spun ;
Of comely women kneading fair, round loaves ;
Of open doors revealing simple hearths
Where yet each furnishing was exquisite.
The tools were beautiful as instruments
Of Nature are, adapted to their end
As perfectly. The angels came and went
Between the city and the throne of God
And carried up to Him, not praise alone
But also spirit replicas of all
The work—an offering acceptable
To Him who loves His handiwork, mankind,
And therefore needs must love the work of men
The second generation of His own.

I saw that all things made in Paradise—
The fair conceptions of redeemed desire,
Wed to the labour of two human hands,
Acquired through intimacy so prolonged
As well as through the fitness absolute
Of their ornateness or simplicity
What seemed an individual life, at least
A talismanic virtue, such as dwelt
In Arthur's sun-bright sword Excalibur.
And every artist there, in clarity

WORK AND REST IN THE CITY

Of soul, was pliant to the forming breath
Of God and open to His influence.

Whatever was achieved with spade or pen
With brush or chisel had but one intent
And seemed to be one cup, one holy Grail
Designed in dreams but hammered out by day
That human hands might hold to human lips
The life of God.

Swift-winged the visions were ;
The groups of men, returning from their work,
Made cheerful pageants in the streets. I heard
The sounds of laughter and of dancing steps,
Of running feet that echoed from a bridge—
Oh the pattering of happy feet
As beautiful as raindrops that delight
To dance upon the sun-touched, polished stones !

Men wandered by the margin of the sea
Or through the purple vineyards on the hill ;
And some from towers contemplative looked forth
On all the wide campaign suffused with peace,
And as a way-spent bee that croons above
A clover field, they murmured, singing low :

“ How great the goodness
Which Thou hast laid up
For them that fear Thee
For them that trust Thee,
Before the sons of men ! ”

THE CHILDREN

X.—*The Children.*

O Little ones of Paradise
Of love and laughter free,
Half Heaven lies within your eyes,
God grant ye welcome me!

As birds that winter brings to threshing floors
Young children waited for the potter's waste
Of clay to make their mimic cups, or took
The scented shavings and the cool sweet cubes
Of new-sawn wood to build Jerusalems
Unstable as the walls of Jericho ;
While others with a reverent earnestness
Were making perfectly some simple thing.
I saw a flight of joyous babes that rode
Upon the wide-stretched wings of willing birds,
Accompanied by cherubs no less glad.
While other children sailed their little boats
From bridge to bridge upon the singing stream,
Or swung beneath the tamarind trees, or tossed
From hand to hand such toys as might have made
An Atalanta pause.

And some had made
A little play out of the death of Fear
Of whom they spoke as of a giant old
And fabulous, and hid his effigy
With mock solemnity beneath the sand
And laughing said " He can't come up again,

THE CHILDREN

He's not good seed." Then joining hands they sang :

" Fear, we never more shall see,
Someone struck him with a Tree
Long ago on Calvary ;
Sing we then that victory
Joyfully, right joyfully."

They knew not all the import of their play
But those who watched were moved almost to
tears
Remembering deliverance ; for though
With earliest dawn upon that happy shore
Had come the knowledge of release from Sin
Such liberty was not entirely strange :
Through holy charity or fervent faith,
For blessed moments, even while on earth
They had been raised above Sin's cloudy sway ;
But Fear is of an older dynasty
Coëval with the human race,—his voice
Was known in Eden and his threat was heard
Pursuing on the heels of Law ere Sin
Was yet conceived ; thus servitude became
A habit of the blood : the meaner fear
To suffer and the nobler fear to sin ;
And slowly therefore can the human soul
Shake off the shackles of the tyrant Fear
And stand upright, a priest and prince, to God.
The children's play memorialized for those

THE CHILDREN

Now free, the strife by which their bonds were
loosed
And laid upon Captivity, and all
Their freedom came about them freshly sweet.

But ah ! those babes that play upon the steps
Of God ! The souls of sinners purified
Are like red garden roses, but these babes,
These innocents, had all the touching charm
Of wild, unlooked-for flowers. Radiant
They were with joy, and honey-sweet with Love,
And fragrant with the balm of reverence.
The universe affords no parallel
To their gay winsomeness. The cuckoo's cry,
The meadow gold of May, the light of dawn,
The laughter of the southern seas—none have
Such tenderness, such quintessential mirth.

O little ones of Paradise,
Of love and laughter free ;
Half heaven lies within your eyes
God grant ye welcome me !

THE SUPPER

XI.—*The Supper.*

Ah, God, Thou Heart of Paradise !
We have not far to flee ;
From weak, blind cries to happy sighs,
Thy footstool to Thy knee.

From slender spire and swelling dome there came
The soft commotion of the swinging bells,
A melody so delicate and low
So fluent in its wave like rise and fall
It seemed the wind was all the bell-man there.

I found myself beside a gentle down
Upon whose daisied floor a feast was spread
While all the city's fair inhabitants
Assembled there. I saw they had increased
In beauty since the dawn ; that women's lips,
Unkissed on earth of aught save burial clay,
Were trembling still with ever fresh surprise
Of love so sweet ; that men, long tantalized
By shallow pools of fondness, now drank deep
Of pure affection's wells. All moved and spoke
With royal grace yet with simplicity
As princely children do ; for all day long
The sacramental Sun had drawn away
Some part of Earth's alloy, and fed them with
Himself, until their long hid lineage,
Their birth as sons of the Most High, the traits

THE SUPPER

Of light and love that prove their family,
Were clearly visible.

The purple haze
Was fragrant as the fields where roses bloom
About Damascus and the far Shiraz.
The heav'nly strains that blest our dawn and noon
Now blest our crimson eve. "But must we lose
Our Sun?" I cried, perplexed as were those two
Who journeyed to Emmaus long ago—
When lo, within, the level rays that streamed
Towards the western limit of our board,
Left vacant until now, appeared a form
Of dazzling beauty, and our leaping hearts
Proclaimed Him Christ;

Not as the Christ upon
The rood, He came, nor as the pallid Christ
That from the painted glass looks down to plead
For sympathetic tears, but as a Man
Of men, the conqueror of Death and Hell.
He was the Ancient of all Days, though fresh
With morning dew; the Lion of the tribe
Of Judah, though the lily of the vale;
The Brightness of His Father's Glory though
A gentle maiden's son.

With Him He brought
The first fruits of the saints, the promised three,
And many another shining one in whom
The beauty of the Lord was magnified.

With looks of tender love for all His guests
And giving thanks to God, Christ took the bread

THE SUPPER

And blest, and brake, and drank new wine with
us,
And spoke of deeper blessedness to come
Within His Father's realm. The strongest faith
Could hardly realize there might be growth
In such a bliss as ours who saw before
Our eyes Him whom all nations have desired,
Who tasted of His graciousness and felt
His effluence incomparably sweet ;
But as He spoke He made us passionate
For God, and that sweet Comforter, Who seemed,
Till now, elusive as the wind. He spoke
Besides, of all the grace of mother, maid
And saint in one blest Lady summed ; of new
And unsuspected powers waiting us
And greater glory, even for Himself,
When all the heavenly mansions should be filled.

Some sat in awful blessedness, and some—
The Annas and the Simeons of faith—
Accustomed to an intercourse divine,
Felt no constraint, but a delightful ease
Because their Host had laid aside the veil ;
And freely these conversed with Him until
Above the rippling talk there flowed the sound
For which all ears have hungered hitherto—
The lovely laughter of the Man that died
On Calvary.

 The patient beasts drew near
And gazed at Him with soft pathetic eyes
That pleaded for forbearance and excuse.

THE SUPPER

And He, the Lamb of God, looked round about
On these meek servitors, obscurely kin,
And owned the tie and fed them and caressed,
And blessed the birds and every living thing.
The clouds rolled up before Him one by one
And flushed with rapture of His touch ; the
streams

Were odourous and petal tintured as
They laved the Rose of Sharon's feet ; The
winds
Came up and slept upon His hands, and all
Creation seemed one sigh of ecstasy.—

Too soon the silver screen of evening hid
The choir of saints, the clouds made crimson vails,
The western sea became the corporal
Our Eucharist was ending and we sang :

THE HYMN.

The West has unfurled her red flags for the vailing
The vails are unfurled,
We thank Thee, we praise Thee, we worship, we
bless Thee
Light of the World, Light of the World.

From the cloud to the clod as a lark Thou descendest
From the cloud to the clod,
Thy heart is divided between Earth and Heaven
Till we are with God, till we are with God.

THE SUPPER

All day as a dove Thou hast lain in our bosom
All day as a dove,
But night cometh on, by Thine eagle-strong
pinions,
Bear us above, bear us above.

For God and His rest, the redeemed are sighing,
For God and His rest,
O blest Bird of Paradise! bid us be flying
To Thee and Thy nest, to Thee and Thy nest.

We ceased, for Heaven's tender melodies,
The sum of every welcoming since life
Began, God's heart made audible, swelled out
Upon our ears. Beside us all the dusk
Was troubled as with flight of homing birds,
And lo! our best and loveliest, the sons
Of God too kingly to be hid, were sped
Towards the haven of their hearts' desire
And ours. They were our vanguard, they the
hands
To grasp the shore which soon the feet should
tread,—

The outer petals of the living rose
Red with the wine of Christ; that rose of which
The flower of Sharon was the archetype.
And we, who shared one sap, one dew, with them,
And with the folded leaflets of the church
On earth were not cast down because some leaves
Leant over ripe and revolute, but stood,—
Our thankful *Nunc Dimittis* said, to hear

THE SUPPER

The firmamental praise, the singing stars,
The voice of many waters and the sound
Of harps, the song of first fruits unto God,
The clash of cymbals and the cry of strings,
The six-winged seers Trisagion, the hymns
Of all the elders with the rhythmic beat
Of angels' wings like forest leaves in June.—

And when I woke the darkness brooded still
Save that a single sanctuary lamp
Glowed in the east, a star of Bethlehem.

Ah, God, Thou Heart of Paradise!
We have not far to flee
From weak, blind cries to happy sighs,
Thy footstool to Thy knee.



A Modern Outlook : Studies of English and American Tendencies.

By J. A. HOBSON. Crown 8vo. 5s. net.

CONTENTS.

LIFE AND LETTERS.

The Lost Art of Conversation—Co-Partnership in Nature—The Population Question among Books—The Compensations of Stupidity—A Go-as-you-please Philosophy—A Plea for Controversy—A Puritan Document—The Grip of the Specialist—The Confession of Mr. Wells—To the Memory of Thomas Paine—The Case of Samuel Butler.

THE WOMAN OF THE FUTURE.

The Woman of the Future—The Sex War—The Alarm of Motherhood—The Business of Marriage.

AMERICAN TRAITS.

The Genius of Lincoln—The Autocrat—A Critic of America—The American Woman—The Spirit of American Humour—Is America Heading for Aristocracy?—The Romance of America—The Boom-Child.

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

The Church for the People—An Anglican Bishop—The Faith of Free Thought—The Churches and the Social Soul.

OF POLITICS.

The Sovereignty of Society—The Wild Man—Agitation—The Game of Efficiency—The Politician's Soul—Our Lost Romance—The Two Englands—The Sacred Rage of the People.

"On politics in general Mr. Hobson says many acute and true things."—SPECTATOR.

"Mr. J. A. Hobson is one of those fortunate men whose names at once suggest a quality."—THE BOOKMAN.

"A volume of keen perception and ripe thought."—INQUIRER.

HERBERT & DANIEL, 21 MADDOX STREET, W.

POETRY.

THREE ATTRACTIVE VOLUMES.

Eyes of Youth.

A Book of Verse, by Padraic Colum, Hon. Mrs. Lytton, Shane Leslie, Viola and Olivia Meynell, Hon. Mrs. Lindsay, Hugh Austin, Monica Saleeby, Maurice Healy, and Francis Meynell. With four early Poems by Francis Thompson, now first published in book form. The Foreword by G. K. Chesterton. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

"Four early poems by Francis Thompson, hitherto unpublished in volume form, lend peculiar interest to a little book of verse by various hands."—*ATHENÆUM*.

"Altogether, the little volume is well worth reading. Most of the contents show a pure and modest poetic purpose; and the whole helps one to realise that much good verse is being written in quietness by people who write it for its own sake."—*THE TIMES*.

"It is not possible to cite all the 'variety verging on quaintness' represented in this interesting little book, but the volume may be commended to the notice of all interested in poetry."—*DAILY TELEGRAPH*.

"There is not a poem between these covers which does not bear the impress of conscientious craftsmanship, not one that is devoid of true poetic feeling."—*YORKSHIRE OBSERVER*.

"It is sweet to be reminded of such English Poets who live, quite a little band, amid the horde of sacrilegious versifiers."—*EVENING STANDARD*.

A Book of Verse by Living Women.

With an Introduction by Lady Margaret Sackville. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net; leather, 5s. net.

"This dainty volume is full of good things. The selection is one of the best I have ever seen."—*C. K. S. in the SPHERE*.

"These women touch things tenderly and with beautiful discretions. The collection is a good one."—*MANCHESTER GUARDIAN*.

"It will be read with pleasure."—*COUNTRY LIFE*.

"The volume is proof indisputable of a widespread intellectual and poetic vitality amongst our contemporaries of the sweeter sex."—*YORKSHIRE OBSERVER*.

For Her Namesake.

An Anthology of Poetic Addresses by Devout Lovers to Gentle Maidens. Edited by Stephen Langton. Fcap. 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d. net; leather, 5s.

"The most fastidious of lovers will find something to please him in this industrious collection of passages of verse—a maiden of a different name being the chosen subject of each of them."—*THE TIMES*.

"Made with excellent taste and most attractively produced."—*THE LADY*.

"A very dainty piece of book-making from every point of view—from that of the collector of delicate verse or pretty volumes, in particular."—*SUNDAY CHRONICLE*.

HERBERT & DANIEL, 21 MADDOX STREET, W.

Talleyrand the Man.

Translated from the French of BERNARD DE LACOMBE
by A. D'ALBERTI. With two portraits in collotype.
Demy 8vo. 15s. net.

"M. de Lacombe has done his work admirably, combining the profundity of the scientific historian with the light touch of the literary artist."—THE TIMES.

M. de Lacombe's work deserves recognition, for it evidences a careful study of authorities, and gives a very fair picture of the personality it seeks to describe."—WESTMINSTER GAZETTE.

"There is something enigmatic in the extraordinary personality, which is newly and effectively studied in this volume, a volume which few people will read without having their mental portrait of Talleyrand softened and humanised."—DAILY TELEGRAPH.

A REMARKABLE NOVEL BY A NEW AUTHOR.

Martha Vine. A Love Story of Simple Life.

By VIOLA MEYNELL. Crown 8vo. 6s.

"In many ways the writer seems to employ the delightful methods of Jane Austen, and the delicate miniature touches which so took the fancy of Scott . . . the book has remarkable claims on critical attention."—Mr. Alfred Noyes in the DAILY GRAPHIC.

"'Martha Vine's' style owes much to Miss Austen, more to Miss Yonge, a little to George Eliot, but hardly anything to later writers, unless it be Meredith—Meredith when his style is at its simplest and best. It has the humour of all these displayed in the minor characters."—Mr. Wilfrid Blunt in the NATION.

"The author has delicate and acute powers of observation."—ATHENÆUM.

"There is a distinct flavour of Thomas Hardy in 'Martha Vine.'"—NEW YORK HERALD.

The Land of the Yellow Spring and other Japanese Stories.

By F. HADLAND DAVIS. 5s. net.

"Stories which are all poems in prose, beautifully conceived and carefully executed. Lafcadio Hearn would have welcomed these studies of exotic romance."—MORNING POST.

HERBERT & DANIEL, 21 MADDOX STREET, W.

Studies in Arcady ; and other Essays from a Country Parsonage.

By R. L. GALES. Crown 8vo. 5s net.

CONTENTS :

I.—STUDIES IN ARCADY.

The Literature of the People—Dicta of the Poor—More Dicta of the Poor—Village Theology—The Labourer's Listlessness—The Humours of Parish Visiting—Thrift on Fifteen Shillings a Week—A Goodly Heritage—Professor Jack's "Mad Shepherds"—A Sunday Dinner Table.

II.—FOLK-LORE AND TRADITION.

The Christian Lore of Angels—The Devil in Christian Legend and Tradition—Judas in Legend and Folk-Lore—Spiders in Legend and Folk-Lore—Birds in Christian Legend and Symbol—The Christian Tradition in Shakespeare—Christian Dogma and Folk-Lore—Christian Popular Poetry—Easter Traditions—On the Ox and the Ass of the Nativity—A Green Heaven—On Nursery Rhymes.

III.—SPEECH AND LANGUAGE.

Some Old-fashioned Phrases—On Victorian English—The Destruction of Dialect—On Proverbs—The Names of the Days of the Week—On the Names of Flowers—Beautiful Words.

IV.—DISCUSSIONS AND DIGRESSIONS.

Catholicism and Happiness—Life Living Creatures—Christian and Romantic—On Pan-cakes and Pan-pipes—Christmas Beer in Workhouses—Arts and Mysteries.

"A country parson, Mr. Gales really lives among the poor. Through patience and tact he has come to understand these strangers, to know the workings of their minds and trace the effect of their material conditions. If he laughs at them, he loves them ; if he speaks plainly of their faults, he does not count among them 'ingratitude' for favours and advice not asked. In other words, he is the friend of the learner, not the patron ; and we believe his book to contain more good sense and independent thinking on a difficult subject than is often found. . . .

"He is a delightful writer, full of good stories, quaint lore, and love of language, and inspired with a gentle humour and a kindly brooding temper which savour of a lost age. His essays on names, on Christian legends and usages, on folk-lore and other subjects, show him a linguist and a scholar."—THE TIMES.

"In all nearly forty subjects are treated by the author with much literary charm, and from the outlook of a keen, observant, broad-minded cleric in intimate touch with the people concerning whom he discourses. . . . The essays on folk-lore and speech and language are marked by wide and cosmopolitan reading. The whole volume can be warmly recommended."—DAILY GRAPHIC.



